

## *The Catholic Women League of Canada 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention*

*Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, August 6-9, 2017*

### **Theme: Inspired by the Spirit Women Respond to God's Call**

The 938 delegates and guests attending the Convention had a wonderful, insightful time and enjoyed a variety of activities: lobster suppers, tours to lighthouses and a winery, and to the North Shore, Charlottetown driving and walking tours, a wine and cheese reception, kitchen party, Canada dinner and super entertainment, Provincial dinners, inspiring opening and closing Masses at St Dunstan's Basilica as well as Masses on Monday and Tuesday at the Delta, great spiritual exercises, resolutions dialogue, business sessions, interesting guest speakers, Anne of Green Gables dress-up, gala banquet, and great entertainment. It was a good learning and spiritual time for all.

After some fun tours on Saturday and Sunday, the delegates got down to Convention business. A resolution session gave delegates an opportunity to learn more about the purpose of resolutions and review the four resolutions that were to be presented during the convention.

The official opening and Eucharistic celebrations were held at St. Dunstan's Basilica. Provincial presidents marched in carrying their provincial flag and the National Executive followed them to begin the evening. More than twenty priests, bishops and archbishops attended the celebration of the Eucharist on the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The church was packed with CWL members, their guests and the local church members. A beautiful choir, hundreds singing and a meaningful spiritual service provided a beautiful experience. During the opening ceremonies the following people brought greetings: Provincial President Irene Gallant, Lieut. Governor Frank Lewis, Fr. Brian MacDougall, Bishop Richard Grecco, National President Margaret Ann Jacobs, Mike Duffy, Chief Brian Francis and Jazz Poirier from the Knights of Columbus.

Afterwards, an enjoyable wine and cheese opening reception was held at Murphy's Community Centre with more than 550 attending this reception.

On Sunday evening we hosted a wonderful concert with Treble with Girls at the Delta. Three ladies and a gentleman provided lively versions of popular songs and entertained special requests. At one time we had about 300 people doing a chain to a rollicking fiddle tune. This incremental event put members and guests in the mood for the Convention days to come.

Starting Monday morning, every session opened with a spiritual service or Mass and closed with prayer. Much work went into preparing the daily liturgy book which was separate from the Convention Program and 2017 Annual Report. Prayers focused on these themes: Restoring Awareness, Pentecost Fire, Finding God in Nature and Pentecost Prayer.

After the Monday Eucharistic celebration Ken Yasinski gave a presentation on Becoming a Living Thank You. He spoke about love being a decision, virtue is a decision, gratitude is a choice, our life is a gift and we should recognize our giftedness and use it for good works. He encouraged all to start a gratitude journal and write down five things everyday that we are grateful for and that we shouldn't repeat the items.

Ken gave a second presentation on A Catholic Identity Crisis. He mentioned that Catholics need to know their identity, but many do not know their identity. We can look for our identity in church, in scripture. Christ is sending us to be missionaries to all nations. He explored what is holding us back. When we are not evangelizing, we are "babysitters, not Mothers". Ken encourages us to think of our giftedness and how we can use that to communicate to community the love of God and His promises. He quoted from Scripture, "Go and make disciples of all nations. I will be with you to the end of the ages".

After the memorial service for deceased members, the business sessions began with introductions, minutes, correspondence, and reports from provincial presidents.

Monday night members and guests enjoyed a fabulous Canada, Our Dear Home with a delicious dinner and great entertainment by Leo Marchildon and his orchestra and Sylvia Mutch. Comedian Patrick Ledwell kept the crowd in stitches. Many people dressed in red and white as they had done during the day to celebrate being proud Canadians.

During the Eucharistic celebration on Tuesday, a collection of \$4232.00 was taken and this money will be given to the Lennox Recovery House Association.

Dr Reginald Bibby challenged members on what kind of church we need to be and what kind of church we want to be. He talked about ministry, service, lay involvement, caring and enriching lives.

Donna Dunn led a session on Building on Foundation, the League of the Future. This information gave the background necessary to begin strategic planning. Members in the Convention meeting room and across Canada (by live stream) participated in discussions on what we need to do in the future to increase our relevance, efficiency, mission. They also worked on next steps that the Strategic Planning Committee will take into consideration as they roll out workshops across the country.

A commissioning ceremony was held for the new Life members; Louise Doiron was commissioned during the ceremony.

The business session in the afternoon had many Provincial Presidents and members of the national chairpersons give short reports of the activity highlights.

After chairpersons gave their reports, if there was a resolution associated with their portfolio, then the resolution was discussed, sometimes amendments were added and a vote was taken. There was lively debate on some of the resolutions which centred on these topics: the R.V.Gladue for Indigenous offenders, mandatory age verification mechanisms for adult pornographic websites, zero -rated status for child safety products and protection from coercion of conscience for healthcare professionals. More information on the resolutions will be in an upcoming edition of the Canadian League.

That evening we held our Provincial dinner at the Jack Blanchard Centre and 214 CWL members enjoyed a great evening, complete with the President's reception, a delicious dinner, a sing song and many opportunities to greet new and old friends.

After Morning Prayer on Wednesday morning, the strategic planning session continued. Dr June Webber gave an update on the Coady International Institute and highlighted how we can help. A parade of Lap quilts of Love and Mercy followed a prayer service. These quilts will be given to palliative care centres. The business sessions continued in the afternoon.

The closing Eucharistic celebration and re-affirmation of officers was at St.Dunstan's Basilica where over 900 delegates and guests attended and eight bishops and 12 clergy celebrated Mass. As usual, there was beautiful music and many people praying twice as they sang the hymns.

The final formal convention event was the Gala Banquet which was hugely successful- delicious food, impeccable service, and lively thought- provoking entertainment by the TD Confederation Centre of the Arts Young Company.

On Thursday, while many weary souls headed back to their homes after four days of great activity, 115 people enjoyed a six/seven hour tour to the North Shore.

The 2107 National Convention was a huge success. I am so proud of the Planning committee and CWL members across the Island who worked for several years to ensure that it would be a remarkable Convention that would showcase our Island, our talents, our hospitality, our culture and leadership. We did it "for God and Canada". We didn't disappoint a soul!

Shirley Pierce

President Elect